Received: 11 August 2020 | Revised: 7 October 2020 | Accepted: 18 October 2020

DOI: 10.1111/weng.12526

PAPER

WORLD ENGLISHES WILEY

Nigerian English in Germany

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Funding information
DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft), Grant/Award Number: MA 1652/12-1

Abstract

The study investigates language use and language attitudes among Nigerian immigrants in Germany, thus contributing to the study of World Englishes in mobility and migration. The data comprises ca. five hours of recorded interviews and is analysed both for the linguistic features it displays and the language attitudes expressed by interviewees. In the German environment, Nigerian Standard English has to be adapted to the needs of lingua-franca interaction, which leads to intensive borrowing and other contact influences from German. In its conclusion, the study takes issue with prevailing policies in Germany, which promote rapid acquisition of German and look on lingua-franca English as an obstacle in the way of achieving this goal. It argues that for a transitional period lingua-franca interaction should be seen as taking place within a multilingual repertoire that minimally requires English and German, but – depending on domain and context – may also include further components, such as Nigerian Pidgin.

1 | INTRODUCTION

The present study investigates language use and language attitudes among Nigerian immigrants and sojourners in Germany. The core data is provided by three focus-group interviews bringing together responses from nine informants and amounting to a total of five hours and fifteen minutes of recorded and transcribed speech. At the most immediate level, the study is a contribution to research on world Englishes, specifically in contexts of migration and mobility. As the research participants originate from Nigeria – a postcolonial nation state known for its complex

multilingualism – and are coping with the different multilingual challenges of lingua-franca interaction in Germany, the study also makes contributions to contact linguistics and research on English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). The approach is innovative in two ways. With regard to Nigerian English, it explores the variety in an 'extra-territorial' language ecology in which it has not been studied previously. With regard to ELF in Germany, the study broadens the scope from American and British English, the two varieties most often discussed in relation to emerging ELF norms (see, for example, Jenkins, 2007, pp. 190–225), to include a major West African English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) variety.

The oldest and still strongest strand of research on English in Germany has focused on lexical borrowings from English into German (see, for example, Görlach, 2001, 2002; Onysko, 2020) and is thus not directly relevant to the present study. Studies with a wider, sociolinguistic focus on how English has come to complement and, possibly, to replace German have generally concentrated on elite social domains such as academia, international business, politics and diplomacy (for a comprehensive overview see Ammon, 2014). For example, Göttert (2013) has documented the decline of German as an academic lingua franca, while Gundermann (2014) and Göpferich, Machura, and Murphy (2020) have analysed more recent developments that have helped establish English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) in German institutions of higher education.

Within world Englishes studies, Berns (1988), Hilgendorf (2007, 2010) and Mair (2018, 2019), among others, have pointed out that English is increasingly taking on functions in Germany that go beyond those typically associated with foreign languages. In this context, Fuller (2020) has recently discussed the special status of 'Anglophone' immigrants to Germany and their specific privileges and challenges when it comes to integration into the wider society; again, however, the focus has tended to be on fairly well-to-do cosmopolitan L1-English 'expats' and the well-educated, upwardly mobile and internationally orientated segments of the German middle classes that they typically interact with (for example in the context of international or 'bilingual' schools – Fuller, 2015). There is as yet only limited awareness of the fact that the increase in ELF use in Germany involves more than the standard varieties promoted by academics, diplomats, and politicians. Specifically, there are very few publications on the language of Anglophone West African immigrants to Germany (but see, with a focus on the Ruhr industrial area, Fonkeu, 2019; Meierkord & Fonkeu, 2013; Meierkord, Fonkeu, & Zumhasch, 2015).

In their survey of social agents promoting 'Anglophone practices in Berlin,' Heyd and Schneider (2020, pp. 149–150) identify three key groups of habitual users of English within Germany:

- upwardly mobile German speakers for whom functional bilingualism in German and English is key to professional success and participation in contemporary cosmopolitan culture;
- tourists and the tourist industry; and
- an international 'expat community […] often portrayed as a hypermobile elite associated with jobs/activities in arts and culture, digital media or other post-industrial' sectors of the economy (Heyd & Schneider, 2020, p. 149).

They conclude with a fourth group, which they characterise as existing 'in the shadow of this highly visible and mediatised expat community' (Heyd & Schneider, 2020, p. 150) and which they describe as follows:

> […] a multitude of English-based speakers and speaker communities involved in global migration under more austere socioeconomic conditions, in particular legal and illegal migrants and refugees in search of liveable conditions. With this diverse community comes a broad spectrum of English-based varieties, contact languages and vernaculars. It is likely that some very drastic slope exists in terms of prestige, recognition and cultural capital of the different Englishes that are represented in Berlin by these heterogeneous speaker groups. (Heyd & Schneider, 2020, p. 150)

For illustration, Heyd and Schneider (2020, pp. 150–154) provide some linguistic-landscape evidence obtained from the Nigerian community in Berlin. Clearly, however, for it to provide a comprehensive picture of the sociolinguistic life of the community, such evidence from the linguistic landscape requires primary data obtained from speakers 'on the

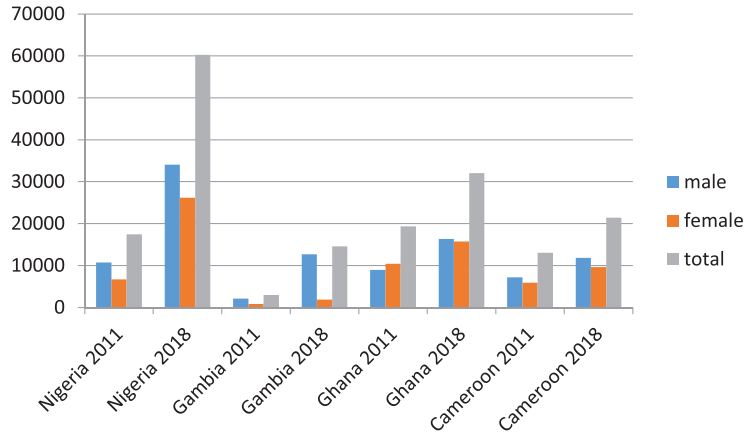

FIGURE 1 Foreign nationals from four West African countries in Germany – 2011 and 2018 [Colour figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

ground,' which is precisely what the present interview-based study aims to do (admittedly in a locality that may be considered provincial by Berlin standards). Section 2 provides basic demographic facts about recent immigration into Germany from West Africa and presents the data used for the present study. Section 3 explores /h/-deletion/insertion and a number of inflectional processes on the verb and noun, in order to establish the corridor of variability on display in informants' English. Section 4 deals with Nigerian varieties of English in the context of ELF use in Germany, while the following Section 5 turns to informants' multilingual practices, in particular borrowing from German and code-switching between English, German and Nigerian Pidgin, offering an account in terms of sociolinguistic stance. Section 6 discusses the study's findings in the broader context of informants' language attitudes and ideologies and the role of language in integration. Section 7 summarises the main results and makes suggestions for further research.

2 | THE DATA

Germany has a considerable history of immigration from Africa (Mazón & Steingröver, 2005) and a rapidly growing number of immigrants today. The crucial difference between Germany and European countries with a longer history of colonialism in Africa, such as the UK, France, Belgium or Portugal, is that – with the exception of Namibia (irrelevant to the present study) – the German language plays no significant role as a second-language in any of the major African countries of origin and that, as a result, immigrants usually have limited or no fluency in German on arrival and are by and large unfamiliar with German history and culture.

A first statistical orientation about current trends is provided by census data, in particular the *Ausländerzentralregister* (central register of foreign residents). Figure 1 gives the following figures for the years 2011 and 2018 for the four West African countries accounting for most of the immigration from this region.

Figure 1 shows steep increases for all four countries during the period of observation. Beyond that, however, there are also significant differences. While there is broad gender parity in immigration from Ghana and Cameroon, males dominate in the case of Nigeria and even more so The Gambia. Note that these figures considerably under-report the size of the relevant communities. For example, they do not cover illegal immigrants and all those first- and second-generation immigrants who have German citizenship.

The data for the present study are provided by three focus-group discussions bringing together five male and four female Nigerian immigrants who all currently live in or near Freiburg, Germany. While this sample cannot represent nationwide trends, it does provide an emic perspective of the Nigerian immigrant experience that goes into great depth

TABLE 1 Focus-groups – Interviews and participants

#	Duration	Interviewer(s)	Participants
1	2h 19 m 34s	Ajagbe, Bohmann	P1: male, 40s, secondary education; asylum pending/assistant nurse and artist P2: male, 20s, some college; naturalised/factory worker P3: female, 30s, secondary education; family member/housewife
2	1h 20 m 4s	Ajagbe, Mair	P1: male, 30s, secondary education; asylum pending/warehouse worker P2: male, 30s, secondary education; asylum pending/assistant nurse P3: male, 30s, some college; asylum recognised/assistant nurse
3	1h 35 m 40s	Mair	P1: female, 30s, college degree; family member/assistant nurse P2: female, 30s, secondary education, asylum recognised/assistant nurse P3: female, 40s, some college; naturalised/kitchen assistant

and is based on a wide range of life histories that are not untypical of the group as a whole. Table 1 provides essential sociodemographic information about them.

Note that in its heterogeneity with regard to education, social and legal status, this group of nine research partners mirrors the new Nigerian diaspora in Germany, which also spans the full range from successful professionals (many holding German citizenship) to those going through various stages of the asylum process – a marginal and often precarious social position with uncertain prospects.

First contacts between the research team and the local African community in Freiburg were established through a church frequented by African and international worshippers and a volunteer initiative offering German classes to asylum seekers and immigrants in which two members of the team are actively involved. The task of recruiting interviewees was, of course, facilitated enormously by the fact that one team-member (Dr Samson Ajagbe) is Nigerian himself. For data collection, the team has organised focus groups (discussed in the present study) and additional individual interviews. Prior to the interviews, participants are told about the general aims of the research and asked to give their informed consent in writing. They can choose between English and German as the language of the interview; with one exception, English has been the preferred language so far. The interviews generally start with an invitation for interviewees to talk about their background in Nigeria, their reasons for coming to Germany, and their experiences in transit and upon arrival. Other topics usually addressed by interviewers are communication with German authorities, experiences in German classes for immigrants, and communication problems in everyday life and at work. Interviewers are instructed to ask specific follow-up questions on linguistic points, in order to explore interviewees' language attitudes. Interviewers do not make the first move to bring up psychologically, politically or culturally sensitive topics (such as traumatic experiences in transit, racial prejudice or gay rights). If interviewees broach such topics themselves (which they frequently do), this is welcome.

As can be seen, interviews #1 and #2 were recorded jointly by Dr Ajagbe, project-team member of Nigerian origin, and an additional 'outsider' interviewer. One (#3) was recorded by the present author alone. Obviously, the 'insider' or 'outsider' status of the interviewer is a crucial determinant of language variation in the individual interviews that have also been recorded as part of the project. In the focus groups, however, this effect is somewhat levelled as, from the moment a relaxed atmosphere sets in, interviewees will not exclusively respond to the interviewer but also talk among

themselves. To test the effect of the presence of the outsider-interviewer, Mair withdrew from interviews #2 and #3 for a period of about twenty minutes each.

In interview #2, English remained the baseline during the outsider-interviewer's absence, most likely because the semi-formal interview setting was maintained by the continuing presence of the insider-interviewer (Ajagbe). In interview #3, where he was the only interviewer, his absence led to a shift from English to Yoruba, interspersed with English and Nigerian Pidgin. Before his absence, Yoruba had been confined to brief asides among the interviewees; Nigerian Pidgin had been present as a topic for discussion and in the form of brief dialect performances for the benefit of the interviewer, but had not been used spontaneously as part of the conversation.

With regard to the issue in focus here, namely the use of Nigerian English, the status of the interviewer as insider or outsider is thus one of several determinants of variation, but probably not the dominant one. It is chiefly evident in mutual accommodation between interviewer and interviewees, which is much more dynamic and flexible with the insider-interviewer, and in interactional phenomena which are probably best subsumed under the heading of 'stance' (cf. Du Bois, 2007; Jaffe, 2009, and section 5 below).

The interviews were orthographically transcribed using the ELAN software package provided by The Language Archive of the Max Planck Institute (MPI) for Psycholinguistics at Nijmegen (https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/), which allows flexible and project-specific subsequent annotation. The recordings and transcriptions allow rich insights into:

- the internal variability of research participants' English;
- code-switching involving Nigerian English (and, occasionally, other varieties of English), Nigerian Pidgin, Nigerian ethnic languages (chiefly Yoruba), and German; and
- participants' language ideologies and language attitudes.

These three dimensions will be explored below with a dominantly qualitative case-based methodology, with the aim of identifying phenomena and variables meriting subsequent quantitative analysis in a larger database.

3 | VARIABLE FEATURES IN RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' ENGLISH

To illustrate the persistent 'Nigerian' quality of immigrants' English, I will document the extent of use of a phonetic variable (/h/-deletion/insertion) and a cluster of grammatical ones relating to inflection on the verb and noun. Statistical data will be provided from focus-group #3, whose participants have the longest residence in Germany (between five and twelve years). The phonetic variable is directly relevant to ELF interaction, as it is perceived as highly salient by practically all German listeners but often goes unnoticed by the Nigerian speakers who display this feature in their English (as we were able to confirm in follow-up discussion with some of our interviewees). The inflection-related variables were chosen because of their frequency and also because they are commonly used as proxies to determine correctness in learner English and degree of standardness in research on sociolinguistics and world Englishes.

3.1 | /h/-deletion/insertion

This variable manifests itself both in the addition of word-initial /h/ where it does not occur in mainstream international standard varieties of English and in the deletion of word-initial /h/ where it would be expected.[1] Variability of word-initial /h/ is occasionally mentioned in the literature on Nigerian English (for example Igboanusi, 2006, p. 494, who considers it typical of L1-Yoruba speakers, and Simo Bobda, 2007, p. 285, who finds it to be present in 'Yoruba and other southern accents').[2]

From a world Englishes perspective, variability of initial /h/ in Nigerian English is interesting because it has a direct parallel in Jamaican *Patois*, the major English-lexifier Atlantic creole in the Caribbean. Also, loss of word-initial /h/ has been common in many British dialects for centuries, sometimes with a parallel trend towards 'hyper-correct' insertion of /h/ where it does not belong. /h/-deletion and hyper-correct insertion seem to have been salient features of nineteenth-century London Cockney – and are still very much in evidence in contemporary Jamaican speech, where expressions such as *'Ow can I be of hassistance, sir*? are considered typical of the register popularly known as 'speaky-spoky' (Patrick, 1999, pp. 277–278), a type of hyper-correct English produced under social pressure by creole-dominant speakers. For the contemporary Nigerian data, three factors – historical colonial English heritage, L1 interference from indigenous languages, and hyper-correction – are potentially relevant as explanatory factors.

One thing which is striking in the case of the (mostly Yoruba) speakers who use the feature frequently is that they are generally unaware of it when asked. In Labov's (1971) taxonomy, variable /h/ may therefore be an 'indicator' of Yoruba ethnicity for them. In contrast to 'markers,' speakers are not aware of such indicators and thus do not actively suppress them as they move up the stylistic formality continuum. In lingua-franca interaction with German speakers of English, this may lead to problems of comprehension, because German listeners tend to find both 'missing' and 'inserted' /h/ highly salient.

The following extracts from the data are given as orthographic transcriptions. The segmentation broadly follows the ELAN version, except where very short segments have been merged to save space. Pauses inside segments are indicated by '(.)'; incomplete words are transcribed with a final hyphen (-). Overlap between speakers is not indicated. The only paralinguistic feature represented is laughter (@). Passages in languages other than English (for example German, Yoruba, Pidgin) are represented in italics, with translations, explanations or, where necessary, broad phonological IPA transcriptions added in square brackets.

As the following extract from focus group #3 shows, /h/-insertion affects both English and German words:

(1) P1: I started with a *Deutschkurs* [= German class]
yeah I did the *B eins*[3] [/haɪns/] then I
that was when I started looking for job you know going to law firms
when that did not work out I had to lo- lo- look somewhere else
[/hels/] then I found myself in the *Pflege* yeah [= nursing]

As can be seen, the /h/ is inserted both before the German *eins* 'one' and the English *else*. By the same token, /h/-deletion is found in both English and German words. This passage, again from focus-group #3, shows an English example (*Nollywood* is an informal term referring to Nigeria's thriving movie industry):

(2) P1: she watches uh German series […]
I would rather watch yeah I would rather watch to be sincere I would
rather watch English
i- it doesn't matter whether it's Hollywood [/ɔlɪwʊd/] or Nollywood as
long as they speak English

Typical examples from German involve the commonly used borrowings *Hauptschule* 'lower secondary school' and *Hauptschulabschluss* 'lower secondary school diploma.'

TABLE 2 Variable /h/ in focus group #3, by speaker

	Words	Non-standard realisations of initial /h/	Deletion	Insertion
Speaker 1 (college degree)	4,342	8	2	6
Speaker 2 (secondary school)	4,541	27	9	18
Speaker 3 (some college)	4,628	9	5	4
	13,511	44	16	28

The only systematic empirical study of the phenomenon undertaken so far has been Gut (2017), who has investigated /h/-deletion and /h/-insertion in university-educated speakers of Nigerian English sampled for the Nigerian component of the International Corpus of English (ICE). In a sub-corpus of around 163,000 words, she finds 773 instances of /h/-deletion and 61 cases of /h/-insertion, on which basis she calculates an average deletion rate of 19.6 per cent and an average insertion rate of 0.4 per cent, with considerable variation across the four genres compared (broadcast news, broadcast talks, unscripted speeches and broadcast discussions) and also across individual lexical items. The ethnic factor does not seem to play a major role in /h/-deletion, which is found with speakers from across the national territory, but is important for /h/-insertion, which 'seems restricted to the South of Nigeria, occurring almost exclusively in the speech of Yoruba people' (Gut, 2017, p. 58). One of her findings – namely that, out of seven speakers who show /h/-insertion without /h/-deletion, six are newsreaders – leads her to conclude that /h/-insertion is a feature of an emerging newsreader style.

Gut's data are not directly comparable to those sampled for the present study. Not all the participants in the focus-group interviews are university-educated, the sociolinguistic interview is not a precise match for any of the four textual categories distinguished by Gut, and none of the interviewees in the present study is from the North of Nigeria. However, the data analysed here confirm Gut's findings to the extent that all Yoruba speakers show /h/-insertion and deletion regularly, and speakers with other L1 backgrounds (for example Igbo) have it at least occasionally.

A comparison of /h/-deletion and insertion in focus group #3 (comprising 13,511 words, not counting utterances by the interviewer) shows 16 deletions and 28 insertions. After eliminating personal pronouns (*he*, *his*, *him*, *her*) and unstressed auxiliary *have*, there are 231 potential environments for deletion. This is equivalent to a deletion rate of 6.93 per cent, which is considerably below the 19.6 per cent obtained by Gut. Conversely, whereas Gut reports ten times more deletions than insertions, /h/-insertion is more common than deletion for all three speakers sampled here. Unlike Gut, I have not calculated an insertion rate. As /h/ can be inserted in front of all vowel-initial words (including grammatical morphemes such as prepositions), the number of possible environments for insertion is extremely high, and insertion rates are correspondingly low. In this situation, the numerical values do not do justice to the salience of the phenomenon for the listener. Even if the absolute numbers of [hask] (*ask*) or [heɪʤ] (*age*) are low, such non-standard pronunciations will be noted – and potentially lead to confusion in the German ELF environment. Table 2 gives the incidence of /h/-deletion/insertion (in English words only[4]), broken down by speaker:

As it happens, Speaker 2, with the highest incidence of non-standard /h/, is the one with the longest residence in Germany (twelve years) – evidence that, also due to the absence of pressure from native-speaker norms, features of the Nigerian accent show a strong tendency to persist in the extra-territorial German environment.

3.2 | Variable inflections

This section briefly surveys usage with regard to the major inflectional processes of English (past tense and third-person singular present on the verb, plural on the noun), again based on the data from focus-group #3. Example (3) below illustrates variable marking of past tense:

(3)
P3: no n- w- what I'm thinking is that maybe the police **suspect** you people
maybe like
P2: no no no no
P1: yeah I think it was here I think they suspected you
P3: yeah nkan t'o ṣẹlẹ niyẹn mummy NAME [= this is what happened,
mother of NAME] they suspected you
because th- those police th- those *Polizei* [= police] you know they are
P2: they said no the thing is we **don't** we didn't have **we don't** have enough cash at at hand and we **don't** we're the their problem **is** we **have** *zu wenig* [= too little] luggage
that **is** the problem
P1: their luggage was too small and they di- they didn't have cash on them
Interviewer: ah and and uh not enough money not enough luggage so you are
suspicious
P2: but we **have** our master card we **have** our master card
we told them m- I have my master card
my brother **has** his own master card too
so we **don't** have to carry cash

As the topic of discussion is an incident that took place eleven years prior to the recording, the past tense would be the default choice – not only in those verbs that are actually used in the past tense, but also in all unmarked ones printed in bold above. Some of the unmarked cases could be interpreted as instances of the historic present, a rhetorical device commonly employed in oral narrative in order to tell a story in a more dramatic fashion. Such an analysis, however, is not plausible across the data as a whole, as the distribution of unmarked references to past time does not correlate with dramatic peaks in narrative structure. In addition, there is similarly random variability in the use of the third-person singular ending in the present tense, as the following extract (also from focus-group #3) shows:

(4)
P3: yea because **it** [Nigerian Pidgin] **affect** the real our real English
P2: English
yea
P3: it really affects us
P2: it affects the real English
P3: so we are forbidden to speak it at home

Plural {s} is also used variably, for example when P3 points out that 'when you go to the bigger **city** a lot of people speak English.' The plural marker is frequently absent in ethnonyms: 'some **German** when you say *hallo* they won't even answer you' (P3). In contrast to the variable use of /h/ discussed above, presence or absence of inflectional marking is noticed by many speakers and consciously evaluated in the community. It should therefore be regarded as a marker rather than an indicator in Labov's terms. Table 3 shows the incidence of standard and non-standard inflections on verbs and nouns by speaker. The distribution shows that Speaker 1, with the highest level of educational attainment, is closest to the standard in her use of verbal and nominal inflections. In the chi square test, variation between speakers is statistically significant for past tense on the verb and plural on the noun at $p < .05$ and $p < .001$, respectively. Third-person singular does not occur frequently enough for reliable testing. Further complications should be borne in mind. Table 3 does not take into account whether a particular form – standard or non-standard – is used to address the

TABLE 3 Non-standard inflections, by speaker, in focus group #3

		Past-tense		3rd-person singular		Nominal plural	
	Number of words	Absent	Present	Absent	Present	Absent	Present
Speaker 1 (college degree)	4,342	8	55	3	5	5	46
Speaker 2 (secondary school)	4,541	27	57	6	6	12	33
Speaker 3 (some college)	4,628	17	47	17	5	18	10

interviewer or among participants themselves. Where inflection is concerned, contact influence from Nigerian Pidgin would also have to be considered in a comprehensive analysis, the expectation being that habitual and fluent users of Pidgin show more 'interference' in their English than infrequent users.

4 | NIGERIAN ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA

Given immigrants' usually limited competence in German, at least in the early years after arrival, Nigerian English is bound to play a significant role as a lingua franca in Germany – in communication with ordinary residents as well as in institutional contexts. At the time of recording the nine research participants had been living in Germany for between three and thirteen years. On the evidence of the data and their self-reports, all of them had some command of German, mostly in the beginners' and intermediate ranges, and all of them used English, both in communication with fellow Nigerians, other (Anglophone) Africans, and German residents.[5]

A crucial difference between the situation of Nigerian immigrants to the UK, the US or Canada and those arriving in Germany is that in the former destinations English is the dominant community language, whereas in Germany it is taught and learned as a foreign language in the school system. On this basis, it can be used in lingua-franca interaction, but at widely varying levels of proficiency, with the general trend being that the older, rural and less well-educated part of the population feels less comfortable with English than the younger, urban and educated segment.

In English-dominant destinations, Nigerian immigrants will soon experience pressure to fit their English into the prevailing sociolinguistic order, both with regard to overt and covert sociolinguistic prestige. In a US environment, for example, common features of Standard Nigerian English that diverge from US norms, such as the use of plurals for some non-count nouns (*thank you for your advices/supports, …* – see Alo & Mesthrie, 2004, pp. 821–822) or the use of the reflexive pronouns in phrases such as *when we meet ourselves* (for *when we meet*) will be frowned upon in Standard-English professional contexts. With regard to African American English Vernacular English (AAVE), by contrast, Nigerian immigrants to the US are likewise faced with a choice that is not always easy. On the one hand, they can 'buy into' the covert prestige of this variety relatively easily if they wish (cf. Ibrahim, 2019); on the other, they may resist complete identification with the local African American community and prefer to retain a 'Nigerian-American' linguistic identity, which – in addition to aiming for a close-to-standard variety of English – might manifest itself in the continuing use of Nigerian ethnic languages and Pidgin.

In Germany, by contrast, Nigerians by and large would have little to worry about most of the grammatical peculiarities of Nigerian Standard English. Indeed, the two features mentioned for illustration in the preceding paragraph would be likely to escape most Germans' notice because they happen to coincide with common L1-German-induced learners' errors in their own English. In the lingua-franca context, there is no rigidly codified prestige norm of English. Nigerian newcomers to Germany will therefore feel little pressure to accommodate to German

lingua-franca English beyond the necessity of achieving mutual comprehension in a given situation. In this process of accommodation, it is usually the accent (rather than vocabulary and grammar) that presents the greatest challenge for both parties concerned. In other words, British and American norms of English usage are relevant at a distance only, and the result of this is that, regardless of the time spent in Germany, Nigerian English tends to persist – a development further helped by its role as one of the languages of in-group communication within the Nigerian immigrant community. The way the German environment affects Nigerian English is thus not through modifying its existing properties, but through adding German elements in lexical borrowing and code-switching (see section 5 below).

Problems arising in this particular ELF constellation can be 'functional' or 'sociopolitical'/'attitudinal.' Functionally speaking, ELF communication will work if there is sufficient mutual intelligibility between German learner English and Nigerian English. Based on research participants' self-reports, this seems to be the case on the whole. Nigerians do not report major problems understanding the English of L1 German speakers, nor do they have a feeling that, apart from Germans' occasional difficulties with their accent, there are substantial comprehension problems for their interlocutors. What can be observed in the interview data themselves is minor misunderstandings between interviewers and interviewees that are due to lack of practice with each other's accents – especially when words are presented without sufficient context. In focus-group #1, for instance, there is a discussion on lexical borrowing from English into German, in the course of which Bohmann mentions the word *fun* as an example, pronouncing it in his American accent as /fʌn/. One of the listeners, P2, mishears the word as the German preposition *von* /fɔn/, and is duly corrected by P3:

(5)	Interviewer 1:	the interesting thing is since that was borrowed maybe two hundred years ago I don't know exactly when but a long time ago everybody is okay with that but if we borrowed I don't know fun from English right now now lots of people will get really unsettled
	P3:	really unsettled
	P2:	*ach so* [= oh I see] V O [P2 articulates this sequence of letters German-style as /faʊ o:/]
	P3:	@
	Interviewer 1:	just as an example
	P3:	[/ef ju: en/] yes just an an example
	Interviewer 1:	[/ef ju: en/] fun
	P2:	okay [/ef ju: en/] okay
	P3:	yeah to have fun okay

In the end, P3 suggests the phrase *to have fun* as a disambiguating environment and clears up the matter for good. At first sight, it is difficult to see how the interviewer's pronunciation /fʌn/ can make the listener think of the German preposition *von* /fɔn/, which he even starts spelling out in German. But of course it is neither a British nor an American accent which provides the standard of reference in this interview, but a Nigerian one, in which the English word *fun* is actually pronounced as /fɔn/ and thus homophonous with the German preposition *von*.

As has already been hinted at, the lingua-franca environment tends to be tolerant of grammatical deviation from international norms of English usage. Thus, P3's self-introduction at the beginning of focus-group #1:

(6) P3 *Ach so* [= I see] my name is NAME NAME hm I'm living in *Deutschland* since six getting to seven years now

will have no negative consequences because the twin 'error' – using *since* rather than *for* with periods of time and using the present tense instead of the present perfect (*I have lived/been living in Germany for six getting to seven years*) – is identical to what would be produced by many German learners of English. Problems may arise if the deviations from international norms are more covert, that is not shared by both parties to ELF interaction, as is the case, for example, in a specifically Nigerian uses of the modal *would*. In Nigerian English, this modal may convey a simple prediction (in addition to the irrealis meaning shared with other varieties).

Apart from accent, it is lexical and phraseological features of Nigerian English that are likely to cause occasional confusion in a German ELF context. For example, Nigerian English keeps alive some usages which have largely disappeared elsewhere in the English-speaking world. Thus, the interviews contain expressions such as *make jest of*, which is used on several occasions alongside *make fun of*,[6] or the intransitive verb *to school*, as in *I schooled in Nigeria* ('I attended school in Nigeria,' see OED, entry for *school* (verb), 5b). Even more difficult for Germans to understand will be contemporary Nigerian slang, such as *yahoo yahoo*, the term for a particular type of internet scam and its perpetrators (cf. Chiluwa, 2009). As the following extract (focus-group #3) shows, speakers tend to anticipate such problems and are ready to offer explanations:[7]

(7) P2: they don't want to go through the difficult way they want to go through the easy way they do yahoo yahoo I don't know if you've heard about that

It needs to be emphasised, however, that a merely technical-functional approach to ELF communication is insufficient, particularly in formal and institutional contexts. Here, sociocultural and attitudinal factors are directly relevant to power and agency. To the Nigerian immigrant with limited proficiency in German, ELF or at least mixed use of German and English would represent a highly attractive option, providing a means to establish the facts of a matter efficiently and thus provide agency to the speaker. In present-day Germany this option is routinely offered to the tourist, the paying customer, and the 'expat' high-earning professional (for example in higher-education contexts). By contrast, it is much less often available in local administration, in the asylum process or in the social services. In these contexts, officials may enforce German as a lingua franca even if, as private citizens, they can speak English well. In the micro-context, insisting on German is a means of holding the client in their place and thus denying them the additional agency they would acquire through English.

This kind of linguistic power game is one specific illustration of a general task facing Anglophone immigrants to Germany, namely figuring out the sometimes rather narrow limits within which the 'global promise of English' holds for them in a particular social and communicative domain. In spite of the near omnipresence of English in Germany's linguistic landscape and its high general prestige among the population, the 'promise of English' still applies in a highly selective way in contemporary Germany. Specifically, English in Germany does not have the status of a postcolonial ESL variety – and is thus not generally available as a fall-back option in public administration. Also, German – and not English – happens to be the lingua franca of the work place in many of the domains that our research partners are employed in. At best, English can be part of bilingual repertoires for lingua-franca interaction. From the earliest stages upon arrival, Nigerian English will thus enter into bilingual or even multilingual practices involving extensive borrowing from and mixing with German, which will be investigated in the next section.

5 | NIGERIAN ENGLISH AND MULTILINGUAL PRACTICES

On the evidence of the interview data, language contact between Nigerian English and German is intensive. There are large numbers of conventionalised lexical borrowings, usually motivated by the new cultural and institutional environment (for example *Ausländerbehörde* 'Office for the Registration of Foreigners,' *Hauptschulabschluss* 'basic-level secondary-education diploma') or to a particular interviewee's job activities (for example *Pflege* 'nursing,' *Stahlbetonfertigteil* 'concrete pre-casting'). Numerous as they are, however, they merely represent the tip of the iceberg. In addition, we find even more ad hoc borrowings of words and phrases, including the routine creation of hybrid forms,[8] and extensive code-switching. Some typical examples include fixed expressions (such as *zum Beispiel* 'for example'), adverbial particles (for example *doch* 'yes' in response to negative questions[9]) and discourse markers (for example *ach so* '(oh,) I see').

To account for the full complexity of all these contact phenomena, I will analyse them in the discourse-analytical and sociolinguistic framework of 'stance.' According to Du Bois (2007, p. 139), 'stance can be approached as a linguistically articulated form of social action whose meaning is to be construed within the broader scope of language, interaction, and sociocultural value.' Note that, by giving equal weight to the dimensions of linguistic form and structure ('language'), the situational micro-context of the interview ('interaction') and the societal macro-context ('sociocultural value'), this definition is broad enough to cover all aspects relevant to the present investigation.

Obviously, not all shifts from the interviews' default language English into German (or Yoruba or Pidgin) are conscious rhetorical moves for stance-taking. Many are completely conventionalised or may have trivial causes. Nor is language shift the only resource that participants can draw on for purposes of stance-taking. Yet it is striking to see how often and how creatively participants use German for stance-taking, which – after all – is a language that many of them do not speak very fluently. Consider the interplay of linguistic form and context in the following extract (from focus-group #3):

(8)	Interviewer:	so you didn't go to
		how long did you go to school
	P3:	I only went-
		I only made *Abitur* [= highest level of secondary qualification in the
		German system]
	Interviewer:	so you went to secondary school and then you came straight to
		Germany
		and you you didn't give up a job in Nigeria before you
	P2:	*doch* I worked as a as secretary in uhm
		[addresses P2] kíní office ẹ yín lawyer [= What is the office of you lawyers called?]
	P1:	law firm
	P2:	law firm
		I worked as a secretary

In the light of what was pointed out above, the two German borrowings are expected. *Abitur* is part of the German institutional terminology of the field of education, and hence a classical cultural borrowing. Note, however, that it is used with an additional twist here, as the German term *Abitur* refers to a Nigerian qualification. This shows that, rather than simply name a German 'thing' by its German name, the speaker uses the German word to translate her Nigerian qualification for the benefit of the 'outsider' interviewer. The interviewer is temporarily excluded from the conversation seconds later, when the speaker addresses participant 2 with a request formulated in Yoruba. To handle such complex interactional dynamics, Du Bois expands his initial definition of stance:

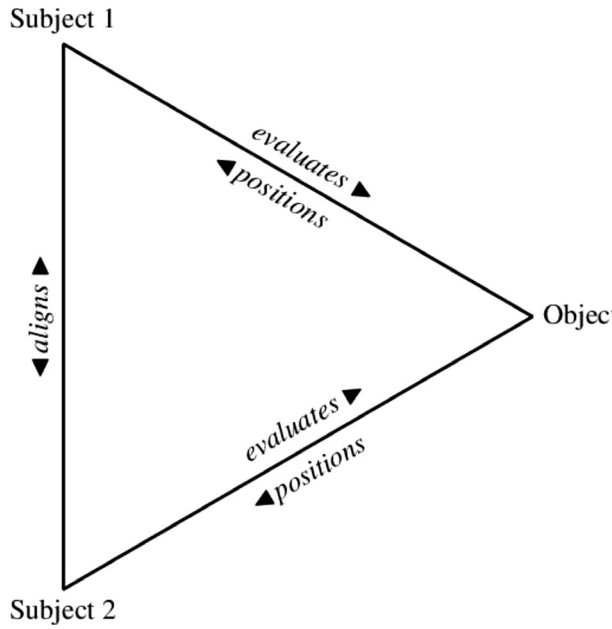

FIGURE 2 The stance-triangle (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163)

> Stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field. (Du Bois, 2007, p. 163)

He proposes the 'stance-triangle' as an appropriate visualisation (see Figure 2).

For the present purpose, Subject 1 is the Nigerian participant in the focus-group interview. Subject 2 is the outgroup interviewer. The 'overt communicative means' used to take a stance is the German language (the default language in the German social context, the native language of the interviewer, and a foreign language spoken with some difficulty by the Nigerian immigrant). The starting point for the focus-group interviews is that interviewer(s) and interviewees have agreed to join for an interview to be conducted in English, as their shared lingua franca. Nigerian participants constitute the in-group as they know each other and represent a particular immigrant community, whereas the German-speaking interviewer represents the out-group; the Nigerian interviewer (where present) occupies a middle ground as a facilitator or mediator. In a successful interview this abstract constellation (mirroring social power-relations seen through the lens of sociological 'macro' categories) will develop its own conversational dynamics, with stance-taking being a prime means for participants to become active agents.

For another illustration, consider the German term *Muttersprache* ('mother tongue'), which several interviewees use to refer to their mother tongue, Yoruba. As the English *mother tongue* is a common word and practically identical to its German equivalent in meaning, this is a 'luxury' borrowing and likely to have been chosen for its perceived extra expressive value. In terms of the stance triangle represented in Figure 2, the object, the Yoruba language, is evaluated positively and positioned as such in the discourse. By choosing to refer to this object in German (a marked choice in the context), the speaker aligns closely with the interviewer. In a 'macro-social' setting in which the German language and culture are dominant and Yoruba culture is foreign and distant, the speaker establishes a link of solidarity that cuts across the divide on the 'micro' level of the ongoing conversation. In informal terms, the underlying logic can be paraphrased as follows: 'You understand what Yoruba means to me because I use the term you would use to describe German.'

Dynamic stance-taking of a more extended kind is apparent from the following passage from focus-group #3:

(9)	P2:	I have my *Hauptschulabschluss*
	Interviewer:	ah okay
		ja dann können wir beide ja Deutsch reden und es gibt überhaupt keine
		Probleme [= well then the two of us can talk German and there won't
		be any problems at all]
	P2:	*na ja* [= well I don't know] @
	Interviewer:	*oder lieber Englisch* [= or English rather]
	P2:	*lieber Englisch* @
		actually I think I'm a slow learner
		uhm till now is when I speak *Deutsch* it's
		even me I know it's *Katastrophe* [= disaster]

Note that the interviewer's sudden shift into German does not disrupt the conversation. P2 understands the offer and actually declines it in German in a natural and idiomatic way which – to borrow from the interviewees' metalinguistic vocabulary – 'flows' very well. Other passages in the interview show that her German, while certainly not error-free, is rather fluent and even serves her well in high-stakes encounters in institutional contexts. English is the mutually agreed lingua franca for the interview, and by shifting into German without warning the interviewer changes his own stance and, by implication, that of the other participants. In the interview situation, the move is an invitation to establish a privileged dyad at the expense of the two other interviewees whose German may not be as fluent. Declining the invitation in English, on the other hand, might have led to a loss of face, as by doing so the interviewee, a person with eleven years' experience of residence in Germany, would have failed both by the standards of mainstream society and her own. Spontaneously declining the offer to speak German in German ('na ja') and consciously downplaying her own competence ('Katastrophe') is her way of retaining agency and not ceding ground to the interviewer.

The following extract, also from focus-group #3, shows that this strategy can be developed to considerable levels of complexity. The subject of this short narrative is unpleasant encounters with *Ausländerbehörde*, and all three emotional peaks in the short narrative are formulated in German:

(10)	Interviewer:	but do you have very strong feelings about *Ausländerbehörde*
	P2:	yeah those people they make your head *kaputt*
	Interviewer:	@
	P2:	you know it's like
		you know if you're happy
		if you just go in there the office
		you'll just be throughout that week you'll be *sauer* maybe *traurig*

Two of the German adjectives – namely *kaputt* ('worn-out,' 'broken') and *sauer* ('angry') – are very common colloquialisms, whereas the third (*traurig* 'sad') is stylistically neutral. In terms of stance, all three serve as cues inviting the German-speaking listener to take the speaker's side in her struggle with the powerful *Ausländerbehörde*. This is not an isolated case. A similar incident figures in focus-group #1, where the speaker uses essentially the same stance-taking strategy:

(11) P3: from Nigeria you have a problem
you get a letter you are not also in good mood and you say okay like
they are pushing you pushing you pushing you to the wall and you say
now I'm going to *Landratsamt* they will not ever you will not see their
face friendly also when you go to someone when you make your cap (.)
in this way *Guten Morgen* and *er sagt Guten Morgen was kann ich für*
Sie tun you give the *Ausweis*
maybe it's the last day you have to make it decide *es tut mir leid uhm*
ich muss erst mal was machen weil dieses Duldung passt nicht you're
not tolerate here anymore so maybe they're coming to take you home
and something like this you have a problem with deportation and it
leads to depression maybe you got a letter you are already depressed
P: from Nigeria other-
Interviewer: aggression as well
P3: *und aggressiv und dann Nervosität und man zittert* and when you get
there absolutely you will not be kind also because you said okay what
will happen today I want it to happen it also happen there
that's why they get their security now because many people they are
also and the the people there they have a lot of experience-

Early on in this passage, the shifts into German involve standard instances. There are technical terms of German immigration law, such as *Duldung* ('temporary and exceptional leave to remain') and direct-speech quotations of verbal exchanges that might have taken place. The dominantly stance-taking shift into German occurs with *und aggressiv und dann Nervosität und man zittert* ('and aggressive and nervousness and you're trembling'). The general logic underlying this example is the same as in the preceding one. The informal paraphrase is: 'By criticising the German institution in its own language I lay claim to in-group status in Germany and invite my German-speaking listener's sympathies.'

6 | LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, LANGUAGE ATTITUDES AND COMMUNICATIVE COPING STRATEGIES

When it comes to language ideologies and language attitudes, participants tend to agree on a number of important points:

1. Nigerian ethnic languages are evaluated positively without reservations. Interviewees with children express a desire to pass them on to the next generation also in Germany. At the same time, they point out that in modern living conditions it is impossible to speak these languages without mixing them with English and, sometimes, Nigerian Pidgin.
2. There is a generally positive attitude towards English. Its role as Nigeria's official language is not challenged by anybody, and its usefulness as a lingua franca in Germany is appreciated. Speakers are aware of the global variability of English, both in its standard and non-standard forms. Some confirm that they use other varieties for specific purposes.
3. All participants understand Nigerian Pidgin and use it, though to different extent. The evaluation of Pidgin is generally positive, with speakers emphasising its practical usefulness, its flexibility and expressiveness, and its power

to establish an atmosphere of solidarity across divisions of ethnicity, class, religion and nationality. There are two reservations. Occasional users state that they would rather not encourage its use within the family. Both occasional and habitual users claim that Pidgin is a language that lacks rules and structure and is therefore easy to learn without teaching. It is regarded as a mix or patchwork made up from other languages.

4. Participants agree on the usefulness of German and the necessity of learning it. This strong motivation to learn German is tempered by a conviction that German is a difficult language and some frustration with formal learning (be it in classroom contexts or through self-study). When illustrating the perceived difficulty of German, speakers usually refer to grammatical complexities, such as the inflection of the German definite articles (*der*, *die*, *das*), and less to issues of cultural distance.

Having outlined this general consensus, I will now discuss how participants make sense of the sociolinguistic reality they encounter in Germany. Understandably, they do so through the lens of the rich experience with language variation and multilingualism that they have gained in Nigeria. This analogy, however, is helpful only up to a point, and three points of friction emerge.

First, like many other European nation states Germany has implemented a 'national language' ideology that is based on the assumption that monolingual communication in German should be the common ground for every resident of the country. The Sorbian and Danish-speaking indigenous linguistic minorities do not challenge this view as they are fully bilingual in German and their native languages. In this view, other multilingual practices are 'add-ons.' Add-on multilingualism can be of a desirable kind, such as functional bilingualism in German and English for professional advancement or any other foreign-language skills involving standard varieties studied through formal instruction. Most other multilingual practices are apt to arouse some degree of suspicion in the eyes of at least some segments of the general public.

An immediate consequence of this prevailing ideology of monolingual purism is that occasional code-switching between German and English, though common in everyday life in many situations, still breaks a convention and may even be regarded as a language error in a teaching or similar formal situation. This contrast between Germany and Nigeria is the subject of an extended discussion in focus-group #1:

(12)	P3:	and I said approximately one- *ein Komma fünf* @
	Interviewer:	@
	P2:	@
	P3:	*und* the teacher said approximately *eins Komma fünf*
	P1:	*circa circa eins Komma fünf*
	P3:	approximately *eins* everybody was laughing @
		and I was say yeah approximately they said
	P1:	@
	P3:	*das ist circa* means approximately
		[…]
	P1:	that is where Pidgin comes in Pidgin is uhm combination of mixing and
	P3:	@
	P3:	I'm gonna make my head like this-
	P3:	the teacher was laughing and say approximately *eins Komma fünf* he was laughing @
	P1:	you went to speak vernacular in school

P3 recalls an incident that happened during his training as an assistant nurse, when he was asked (in German) how much urine an elderly bedridden patient needed to produce per day. When he gave the expected correct answer

'circa eins Komma fünf' (= approximately one point five) litres in the hybrid English-German version 'approximately eins Komma fünf' this apparently earned him hilarity from the other trainees and a slight censure from the teacher. Such code-switching is of course almost inevitable and therefore utterly unremarkable in the multilingual context of contemporary Nigeria. Indeed, it reminds another interviewee, P1, of Pidgin, the most hybrid and mixed language of all.

Indeed, the absence of a direct equivalent to Pidgin in the German sociolinguistic landscape is something several interviewees find worth pointing out. To fill the gap some of them even propose a largely fictitious construct of their own invention, *Straßendeutsch* or 'street German,' which they assume to be doing the same job Pidgin is doing so successfully in contemporary Nigeria. To be sure, the term *Straßendeutsch* exists, though its meaning is rather imprecise. Most commonly, it is used to refer to any kind of demotic straight talk, as opposed to the genteel and refined educated standard. More recently, it has become one of the terms used to denote a variety of youth slangs that have emerged in the multilingual and multicultural urban neighbourhoods of contemporary German cities and are often referred to as *Kiezdeutsch* (roughly, 'hood German') in the sociolinguistic literature (Freywald, Mayr, Özçelik, & Wiese, 2012). However, interviewees use the term to refer to something entirely different, namely the free and unconstrained mixing of languages they were used to in Nigeria, especially in communication involving Pidgin. Here is a fairly elaborate and telling discussion from focus-group #1:

(13)	P2:	yeah and we speak together
		we speak German together with our our different uhm dialects
	P1:	okay yeah yeah
	P2:	yeah even if it will just come maybe you are seated here now
	P1:	maybe even you are speaking to someone in Africa and the person say something you say ah that is *normal* [pronounced as German /nɔrˈmaːl/, with stress on the final syllable]
	P3:	*alles klar* [= *everything's fine*]
	P2:	yeah *alles*- yes [= *everything*]
	P1:	that's German you understand oh is normal and that is *normal* [pronounced as German word]
	P2:	mo *bestelle* kini yẹn l'ana [Yoruba: *I ordered that thing yesterday*, with German *bestellen* 'order' as a spontaneous borrowing]
	[…]	
	P3:	German broken
	P1:	no we we
	P3:	we using German broken here
	P1:	it comes naturally
		so there is German Pidgin also
	P3:	Broken Pidgin yeah German Pidgin
	P1:	*Straßendeutsch* [= *street German*] yeah but you use it with your language (.)
		but it's part of you you don't know (.) it just it comes out

Broken is a widely used synonym for Pidgin. The linguistic phenomenon informants report from their own usage – inadvertently inserting German words and phrases (*normal*, *alles klar*, *bestellen*) when talking English or Yoruba to their relatives in Africa – is real enough. To interpret this as evidence for the existence of a stable German Pidgin, comparable in its elaboration to Nigerian 'Broken,' misrepresents sociolinguistic reality. Yet, the same ideas are articulated by focus group #3:

(14) Interviewer: and do you see any role for Pidgin in Germany […]
P3: I think the the German has Pidgin also
P1: uh they call it street
P2: eh street street *Deutsch*
P3: street street *Deutsch*
P2: mhm

As can be seen in this short extract, all three participants confirm P3's assertion, again suggesting *street Deutsch/Straßendeutsch* as the appropriate term for the alleged German Pidgin.[10] German, English and Pidgin interweave in complex ways in the linguistic data, and they are connected in sometimes surprising ways in our research participants' folk sociolinguistic theories and their language attitudes. Describing the global spread of English has thus become even more complex than in the colonial and early postcolonial stages of the development. As Abram de Swaan has remarked:

> Within [the global 'English Language Complex'] there are dominant and non-dominant varieties of English; there are even global varieties that are 'subaltern' or 'dissident' and that spread because they are nevertheless coopted by the world entertainment system. This places the global diffusion of English in an entirely different light, since standard Englishes may be both dominant *and* empowering varieties, whereas varieties such as Ebonics and Jamaican may be both non-dominant *and* liberating. (de Swaan, 2020, p. 215)

Ebonics (that is African American Vernacular English) and Jamaican, the two 'non-dominant' globalised varieties used for illustration, are not those relevant to the present discussion, but the argument itself definitely applies to Nigerian English and Nigerian Pidgin in the non-colonial context of contemporary Germany. Specifically, it encourages us to re-consider the role of Pidgin, the 'subaltern' and 'dissident' variety that Nigerian migrants take wherever they take Nigerian English. On the evidence of our interview data, Pidgin survives and thrives in Germany alongside English. This is clearly so because it remains 'non-dominant *and* liberating' for the Nigerian community in the diaspora.

As for English, fluency in any kind of standardised English, including a postcolonial variety such as Nigerian English, is an asset for immigrants. In that sense, asylum seekers from Nigeria and other Anglophone African countries have more linguistic agency on arrival in Germany than those from Francophone African countries, where fluency in English is not as widespread. As has been pointed out, however, this initial 'privilege of English' often does not turn into a long-term advantage. In Germany, people who manage to live life in English are typically members of cosmopolitan professional 'expat' elites. To use Manuel Castells's (2010) terminology, they can afford to be globally connected, but locally disconnected, because they have the financial and institutional support that enables them to outsource all their German-language communicative business to others. This is clearly not the life encountered by most immigrants from Nigeria.

Castells's matrix of global and local (dis)connection provides for four logically possible constellations. The cosmopolitan one just described (globally connected, locally disconnected) comes with many economic and cultural privileges, but generally precludes local integration at deeper levels. The immigrant ideal is a healthy balance that maintains and expands global connections (including connections to the country of origin), while building up robust local connections. The 'worst case' (both from the immigrant and host country perspectives) is the inverse constellation: being locally and globally disconnected at the same time. Sadly, this extremely precarious state happens to characterise the situation of millions of people around the world – and acts a major driving force for many contemporary currents of transnational migration.[11]

Whether immigrants' struggles lead them closer to the best case or the worst case depends on numerous factors – individual motivation and qualification, political and legal frameworks developed for channelling migration,

TABLE 4 Nigerian migrants' linguistic resources in Germany, a four-way matrix of connectivity

	Connection	Disconnection
National/local	(1) German (2) (Standard) English as a Lingua Franca (3) English-German language mixing (4) Selected non-standard Englishes with high-media profiles and pop-cultural cachet	(1) indigenous African languages (2) all forms of spontaneous language mixing other than English/German (for example English-and-Pidgin) (3) Pidgin
Transnational/global	(1) (Standard) English (2) Pidgin (3) major indigenous languages (Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa)	(1) minor African indigenous languages (2) German

the economic situation, to name the obvious ones – but the outcome will at least partly be determined by language: what linguistic resources they bring with them, how they can deploy them in the new context, and which new resources they manage to add to their communicative repertoires. Table 4 presents an overview of Castells's four-way matrix, presented in relation to the linguistic resources relevant for Nigerian newcomers to Germany.

One message from this compact survey is clear. The only languages which provide local connectivity in Germany are German and, to a variable but limited extent, English. As has been pointed out above, English-German language mixing may be efficient from a purely practical point-of-view, but is not as conventionalised and socially acceptable as comparable forms of language mixing in Nigeria. For full participation in German society, fluency in German remains essential. This, incidentally, is a point which happens to be argued most forcefully by those of our interview participants who have 'made it' in Germany. The local connectivity of non-standard Englishes (including Pidgin) is extremely domain-specific. Knowledge of non-standard English slang terms associated with various types of street culture or musical traditions may be helpful for a performer in the entertainment business or a frequenter of clubs, but will be largely useless for a trainee nurse. As for Pidgin, observation and interview data confirm that some German locals are competent in Pidgin, but this again occurs in specific circumstances, such as marriage to Nigerian spouses or affiliation with religious groups outside the German mainstream. This is why Pidgin, in sum, is listed among the languages of local disconnection.

As for transnational and global connectivity, English is clearly dominant. As Nigeria's official language and the global lingua franca, English serves Nigerians in Germany to maintain links to Nigeria, to the Nigerian diaspora anywhere in the world, and to large segments of the population in other European countries and the world at large. Another language with a high degree of transnational connectivity is Pidgin, which is used as an important informal lingua franca *within* an emerging and heterogeneous Euro-African community alongside English, and sometimes even instead of English, for example between Nigerians and people from Cameroon or Benin whose education has been in French and who may thus feel more comfortable using Pidgin English than the standard variety. As for German – the language immigrants spend a lot of money, time and effort on to acquire – Table 4 shows that it does not much extend their communicative reach internationally. Indigenous African languages are clearly under threat in the diaspora. They are mostly used informally among families and friends. In larger cities, speakers of the major language communities (chiefly Yoruba and Igbo) may be numerous enough to make possible the creation of a cultural infrastructure, such as clubs and associations. The evidence from the interview data shows that speakers of these languages are generally highly motivated to maintain their language in the family and community for cultural reasons.

7 | CONCLUSION

The primary aim of the present study has been to shed light on the use of a postcolonial ESL variety, Nigerian English, as it has come to be used as a lingua franca in the context of increasing immigration from Nigeria to Germany. It has

been shown that, in the absence of a focused local norm of English, the phonetic, grammatical and lexical features of Nigerian English persist. While – based on interviewees' self-reports – Nigerian English serves them well as a lingua franca on a practical-functional level (judged by the benchmark of mutual intelligibility), there are major clashes between expectation and reality with regard to the status and the precise nature of the prestige of English in Germany. Whereas competence in English by and large confers high social status in the postcolonial Nigerian context, this is not necessarily so in the German ELF environment, where (Standard) German remains the default language of prestige, with lingua-franca English increasingly serving as an 'add-on' prestige language, but not necessarily in the institutional, social and professional domains Nigerian immigrants will typically find themselves in. If English serves newcomers as a lingua franca, it therefore does so as a component in a bilingual repertoire, together with German. In the linguistically and socially heterogeneous Nigerian immigrant community in Germany, this bilingual repertoire of lingua-franca communication is embedded in wider multilingual repertoires also comprising indigenous African heritage languages and, most importantly, Nigerian Pidgin. In this situation, intensive language contact with German is inevitable from the early stages after arrival, which has been illustrated from the interview data and analysed in terms of Du Bois's (2007) model of sociolinguistic stance-taking.

At a more general level, the present study has made a contribution to research on world Englishes in mobility and migration. In this regard, the present study complements previous research on 'deterritorialised' Nigerian English and Pidgin in computer-mediated communication (see Heyd & Mair, 2014; Honkanen, 2020). Digital mobility of linguistic resources afforded by media and physical mobility caused by migration of speakers are not necessarily connected. For example, the high visibility of African American Vernacular English around the world is largely due to the impact of media and (music) culture, and much less to physical emigration of African Americans to other parts of the world. In the Nigerian case, however, the two tend to go hand in hand, which means that studies of diasporic language use online and offline are both necessary and complement each other. In sum, all these findings add an inflection to the major *topos* of mainstream German public discourse on language and immigration, which is often summarised in the slogan 'die Sprache ist der Schlüssel zur Integration' ['language is the key to integration,' with language being understood to refer to the German language]. What the present study suggests is that, while this slogan is definitely not wrong, it would work even better with the word *language* in the plural: 'Die Sprachen sind der Schlüssel zur Integration.' After all, robust all-round communicative competence is a mid- to long-term objective for most immigrants and may remain unattainable for some. In this difficult transitional period the key to integration is not insistence on exclusive use of German, but an intelligent multilingual strategy. It should balance English and German realistically, with regard to speakers' current competence and the demands of the specific domains of activity, and it should legitimise mixed English-German communication to a greater extent than is the case at present. English as a lingua franca has become an 'inevitable presence' (Mair, 2019) in Germany. This is recognised in academia, business, politics, tourism, culture and entertainment. It has become normal for German universities to offer English language programmes, for German business executives to use English in their boardroom meetings, and for Goethe Institutes to use English in their efforts to promote German language and culture abroad (for example, in Lagos, Nigeria). In this situation, it is time to start thinking about a possible transitional role of English in the long-term linguistic and cultural integration of immigrants.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The material has been collected as part of the project "West African Englishes on the move: New uses of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in Germany," funded by *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG), grant MA 1652/12-1. The author gratefully acknowledges this support. He would also like to thank project team members Dr Samson Ajagbe, for his help with data collection, transcription and translation from Yoruba and Nigerian Pidgin, and Rafaela Tosin, for help with the annotation of the phonetic and morphosyntactic variables discussed in section 3. Thanks are also due to Dr Axel Bohmann, who acted as co-interviewer (with Dr Ajagbe) for the first focus-group interview.

Open access funding enabled and organized by Projekt DEAL.

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NOTES

[1] This formulation covers most cases and will do for convenience here. Strictly speaking, it would require modification to account for a small number of instances in which /h/ is inserted word-internally before stressed syllables starting in a vowel, as in German *gearbeitet* ('worked'), which P2 (focus-group #3) pronounces as /geˈharbaɪtət/.

[2] For a detailed contact-linguistic analysis of the phenomenon see Bamidele (2019).

[3] B1 is the lower-intermediate level of competence in German according to the Common European Frame of Reference (CEFR).

[4] A further 19 instances are recorded in German words used by the speakers. Given that these words make up only a small portion of the text, the incidence of /h/-insertion/deletion is very high in comparison to English.

[5] I use the term *German resident* to account for the fact that many of the locals that African immigrants routinely interact with are people with migrant backgrounds themselves and hence not necessarily fluent in German.

[6] The Nigerian component of GloWbE, the Global Corpus of Web-based English, has 115 instances of *make fun of* and 21 of *make jest of*. This is a small number, but significant nevertheless, as there are only 10 more uses (8 from other African countries) for the entire rest of the world in this 1.6-billion-word corpus of English covering 20 different ENL and ESL countries.

[7] Even if research participants' self-reports do not suggest any major problems with Nigerian English in lingua franca use, it will nevertheless be useful to corroborate this diagnosis with experimental evidence. In one such study, currently in progress, we present relatively context-free snippets from the interview data to German-speaking listeners of various levels of competence in English. In addition to testing comprehension, the experiments are designed to elicit listeners' perception of Nigerian English along a number of evaluative dimensions – on the assumption both the 'objective' difficulty of the accent and the 'subjective' evaluation of it by the listener are relevant in lingua-franca interaction.

[8] These often relate to German-English lexical 'false friends', such as *Fabrik* 'factory', which has the stress on the second syllable in German, but is pronounced with initial stress by one interviewee, presumably on analogy with English *fabric* ('woven stuff/textile'). Another common phenomenon is the pronunciation of German words using the sound-spelling correspondences of English orthography. Thus, *Ziel* /tsi:l/ "target" may be pronounced as/zi:l/ "zeal", with the expected potential for confusion, especially in the context of place names, where the context provides fewer clues for disambiguation.

[9] This borrowing eliminates a source of misunderstanding in several New Englishes, including Nigerian English. Following the question *Haven't you heard the news*?, British and American usage requires *yes* if the addressee has heard the news. Many second-language speakers, on the other hand, answer this question metalinguistically, with *yes* affirming the negative *haven't* ('yes, it is true that I haven't read it') and *no* negating the *haven't* and thus asserting that the addressee has heard the news. German *doch*, specialised as affirmative after negative questions, eliminates this potential ambiguity.

[10] Historically, German colonialism produced hardly any pidgins and creoles. The only candidate for a present-day German-based pidgin is post-World War II *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* ('immigrant worker's German'), a highly reduced ad hoc German-lexifier pidgin that is in no way comparable to Nigerian Pidgin, which has a history of almost two centuries of stabilisation and expansion behind it and has more recently become a natively-spoken creole language for millions of its speakers.

[11] The fourth logically possible constellation – being locally connected without strong global connections – is only indirectly relevant to migration. This kind of life will be enjoyed without regret by many whose livelihoods have not been affected and disrupted by economic, political and cultural globalisation. For some of them, migration and migrants are the object of fear and resentment, as they see them as threatening and undermining the stability of traditional life.

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How to cite this article: Mair C. Nigerian English in Germany. *World Englishes*. 2020;1–22.
https://doi.org/10.1111/weng.12526